1? Cohen E-4,5 (1956-1965) 1967 MS14 Kanuri MS14

holding this title had very few of these offices left—they were now the rights of persons holding quite different titles.

The economy of Bornu was a semi-specialized one. Almost everyone grew some crops, except a few cattle nomads, but at the same time during the long dry season people carried on craftwork, trade, and other specialized activities, such as providing medical or barbering services, or entertainment for those who were willing to pay. Everyone had access to new land, over which a person might establish ownership by his act of clearing it. If he used the land for only a few years, and stopped, then the land passed back into bush with no owner. Continued long-term use, especially that involving inheritance, meant that the owner could do with it what he pleased and transfer it to whomever he pleased. In other words the Kanuri had property concepts of usufruct or use-right, but they also had notions of freehold or private property in which land could be transferred by an individual after he had used it for a long time, or it had been passed on to his heirs.

The people raised specialized crops in the kingdom and practiced a myriad of different crafts. Each local craft was organized into a craft guild that helped set production and price standards under a local craft leader who benefited economically from his position and tried to pass it down through the male line. Markets, too, were under headmen and all goods to be traded went to weekly markets to which came thousands of people from the surrounding area.

Trade was accomplished by barter for the most part, although several forms of currency developed, which can be called special purpose or limited purpose money. For various kinds of trade, and within limits, certain objects—a man's robe, iron bars, slaves, horses, cotton rolls, Maria Theresa dollars, and other items—could be used. The trans-Saharan trader came to Bornu for slaves; he therefore demanded payment in slaves, and slaves became a kind of currency for this trade. People from Bornu traded south of Lake Chad for iron bars. These bars could be used to purchase anything in the markets southeast of Bornu where they were the chief export commodity. The same thing is true of cloth in the southern areas of Bornu where it was manufactured and where it was a major export item. Cloth rolls purchased any number of commodities from Bornu but only in that north-south trade. Cowrie shells came very late to Bornu (1820–1850) and never achieved the success as currency that they did elsewhere.

Another and important method of distribution of goods was carried out within the political system itself. Political superiors gave out enormous quantities of cloth, food, horses, and robes on particular holy days or special events such as rites of passage, or wrestling matches. On one occasion a witness in the early part of the century watched the Shehu give away more than a thousand men's robes and an equal number of bullocks and sheep. Although one would expect the leaders to give more than other men, they also served as a model for the population so that the amount of distribution actually carried on in this way must have been very great indeed.

Another important facet of the economy was foreign trade. Although the famous trans-Saharan caravans are supposed to have declined during the nineteenth century, by all accounts they were still of considerable importance for Bornu. Into Bornu came calico, cotton prints, fine silk, sword blades, writing paper, looking glasses, needles, razors, scissors, knives, cheap jewelry, and guns mostly from Eu-

1: Cohen E-4,5 (1956-1965) 1967 MS14 Kanuri MS14

and then bring me the profits whether or not they had crops growing and whether or not they had labor to carry on the cultivation. If I asked them what would happen to their farm they showed little concern and said merely that they farm because they can do nothing else. The implication is that if they had anything better to do they would stop farming immediately.

Land for agriculture is not scarce in Bornu and all settlements except the capital city have plenty of free or unused land within their boundaries. Adjacent to a Kanuri village or hamlet are the farm plots of long-term members of the settlement and their descendants who have inherited these "house-farms" as they are called in Kanuri because they represent land attached to households. These plots are always bounded and often fertilized by the village sheep and goats. In Magumeri house-farms extend in a circle around the village for a radius of about three quarters of a mile. Outside this circle are isolated farm plots dotted here and there and free land as well as pasture land. Ownership is obtained by clearing such land after having registered this intent with the village head, by inheriting a plot, or by having been given it by the previous owner. The Kanuri see house-farm land as symbolizing long-term and stable association with a village or city, while bush farms, although everyone has a few such plots, mean transience or newness because the household head who farms only these does not yet have any farm plots identified with his compound so that people can say, "There is Modu's house, his house-farms are in such-and-such a spot." Instead they say, "That is Modu, he has moved into so-and-so's house or built a house near so-and-so, and has cleared a few new farm plots a mile or two to the south of town."

An interesting and yet difficult question is that of land ownership. The way in which land is owned can be seen in those practices associated with acquisition and transfer. Anyone can clear new land or land that has been unclaimed for many years. He should report this to his local political leader whose permission is always granted if there are no known claims on the property. Again a man may go to the local political leader and ask where he can farm; he is then directed to available plots on the advice of the leader. Or land may be inherited, usually in the male line, or acquired as a gift from a friend, or it can even be sold. Political leaders sometimes try to exert themselves in being party to all land transfers so that their permission becomes part of the transaction, and they feel they have a legitimate right to do so when the previous owner has used the land for a short period. The difficulty here is that there is no definite rule to tell the Kanuri how long a man should use a piece of land during his own lifetime before he has a total right to transfer it to anyone else. On the other hand, they believe that once land has been inherited it is the property of the family, and decisions about its use and transfer are primarily in the hands of the owners. In practice the Kanuri always hold land because they are using it, having cleared it, inherited it, or come to some agreement over it with the previous owner. In the latter case this could mean anything from an outright sale, practiced more near the larger cities, to an agreement over it with the user who gives the previous owner some percentage of the crop. The system works well when household heads as land owners and users have good working relations with their local political leaders. If this is not the case, then political leaders often insist on helping to make decisions about the land and its ultimate transfer whether it has been held for a short time or a much longer one. I have seen or

1: Cohen E-4,5 (1956-1965) 1967 MS14 Kanuri MS14

been told of many political leaders who rubber stamp decisions about land transfer, simply registering the fact and witnessing its legality. In some cases, however, there is interference, and it is generally discovered when this happens that there have been some previous difficulties in the owner's relationship to the political leader.

Farm plots are generally used for periods of four to eight years. Then they are allowed to lie fallow for about the same length of time. Everyone in the community knows a fallow field and its owner, and there would be trouble if someone tried to use one of these without the owner's permission. If fallow land is unused because the owner has moved away or has given up farming, then the land reverts to the common disposal of the community as a whole. The political leader can then allot these lands to newcomers or other community members, although he would generally be careful to check claims on them by previous owners and their relatives before doing this.

In summary, from the point of view of the people themselves, there are four different kinds of land around a Kanuri village. First, there is land owned outright by the household head over which he has complete authority. Secondly, there is land that has been cleared by a household head or that he was given the right to use by his local leader and which may become totally his or that of his heirs after long years of use and/or inheritance. Thirdly there is resting land, which is a farm plot that has been in use but whose depleted soil the owner will likely use again. If he moves away without trying to dispense with any of these plots then they revert to free land. Finally, there is free unused land around the settlement that can be used for newcomers or those trying to expand their holdings. As far as ownership is concerned, about sixty percent of all land in Magumeri was obtained through inheritance. The remaining forty percent was almost all new land cleared outside the present circumference of farm plots in which the plots had been registered with the village head whose permission had been granted. The important thing to remember about this system is that it works. Litigation over land in Magumeri had to do mostly with what we call "trespassing." People were brought to the courts because they (usually their livestock) had infringed on someone's right to land. There was very little difficulty in general over transfers. People knew what rights were held and how they could transfer these rights to others.

Except for the few farmers who produce either specialized crops like yams or tobacco and then market them, most Kanuri have a dry season occupation such as craftwork, trade, or a service occupation such as native doctoring or barbering. These they view as an occupation, while farming, unless it is the only specialty carried out, is viewed as an important side line. As we have seen in the chapter on the life cycle, recruitment into an occupation is carried on by an apprenticeship system within the household organization. This is even the case for some western types of occupation such as truck driving, and it only recedes in importance when western type schooling is involved.

Traditionally, occupations in Bornu have been organized under head men in each settlement and under an overall head man for the entire occupation who lived in the capital city. Today the traditional occupations such as blacksmith, leather worker, butcher, and so on still have such an organization, although the privileges and duties of a head man are very few and do not extend beyond his local settlement. Nevertheless, men in Magumeri who are butchers, blacksmiths or dyers, and

175 439 formerly been in control of the great trans-Saharan trade routes which brought the products of Negro Africa into the European world, the European nations had established direct trading relations with the coastal peoples by the beginning of the sixteenth century and the importance of the trans-Saharan trade began to dwindle. As trade with the north declined in importance, the Sudanese empires founded on this trade were no longer able to maintain themselves.

175 [643] The empire of Bornu, however, continued to exist though much smaller in size. A new capital, Kukawa, was built near the shores of Lake Chad. The ancient Sef dynasty, whose 'Mais' (kings) had ruled since the beginning of the empire, was replaced by the family of El Kanemi, the Kanembu leader who had [354] been instrumental in driving out the Fulani. The title of [565] Shehu (Sheikh) replaced that of Mai. Within Bornu proper a [423] feudal system existed. Titled nobility were given huge tracts of land by the Shehu. Though these lords lived in Kukawa, the capital, they collected taxes and otherwise administered their lands.

175 648 The weakened empire was unable to resist a final attack, this time from the east. Rabeh, leader of a renegade army from the Sudan which had failed in an attempted revolt there, overran Bornu in 1893. He, in turn, was killed by the French in 175 648 1900. In 1902 British forces entered Bornu, and reestablished the line of the Shehus which had been broken by Rabeh's occupation. The British then ruled in Bornu through the considerably altered organization of the former empire. The Shehu of Bornu,

369 tionably larger than anything found in Bornu today. However,
162 as in all pre-industrial societies, the bulk of the population is engaged in agriculture and lives in the many small villages dotting the plain.

361 One can never travel far in Bornu without encountering a
[491] village. Major villages are linked to one another and to towns
[487] by laterite roads. Tiny villages are linked by a network of paths and tracks to one another. Surrounding each village
• 423 are the fields farmed by each family. Farm land can be had
425 by clearing the brush and making a plot ready for farming.
241 Since this is so easily done, land and its inheritance are not important determinants of the social structure. In theory,
[776] all land belongs to Allah and is in the hands of the Shehu of
[643] Bornu, the political and religious head of all Kanuri. The Shehu distributed large fiefs to Kanuri lords who gave the land to the village heads for distribution to individual villagers. In practice, any newcomer to a village has only to ask the village head for permission to farm and suitable land will be given to him which he must, of course, clear for planting. It naturally happens that those most recently arrived in a village will be given fields furthest from the houses, so that it is obvious that certain fields are more desirable than others. In a town of some size this becomes important. Distant fields may be up to three miles beyond the edge of town, and walking out and back each day to plant or to harvest is a demanding task.
241 Farm land, however, is never bought and sold. In the city this
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[178]

El Kanemi brought
175 with him a group of Kanembu and Shuwa nobles, who formed the
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565 nucleus, along with their men, of the army which drove back
177 the Fulani invaders of Bornu. These noble Kanembu families remained in Bornu and adopted Kanuri culture. El Kanemi built the new capital of Bornu at Kukawa, and his son Shehu Omar
175 ruled from Kukawa. The empire of Bornu had declined greatly
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565 from its zenith in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, and the Fulani attacks were both a sign of its weakness and an additional factor in furthering the decline. In form, however, the empire remained much the same. Many of the old families who had been aristocrats under the Mais retained
175 their titles, their lands and their position. The new noble
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565 Kanembu and Shuwa families that had followed el Kanemi were given Kanuri titles and entered the social system as Kanuri aristocracy. In time, they accepted Kanuri culture, according to accepted procedures of assimilation which are well understood by the Kanuri and apply to conquerors and conquered alike, to slaves and to freemen.

175 The Shehu and his court ruled in Kukawa. Members of the
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565 royal family were given large tracts of land, including many
631 villages, and from their lands they took money for taxes paid
423 to the central government and for their own uses. In like fashion, the nobility, who were the commanders of army regiments and holders of high titles, had their lands and villages. These were the chimas. Even religious leaders, such as the Imam, were
175 given land. The nobles who were chimas, continued to live in
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554 Mogorom - younger sister of the Shehu. A conferred title
565 which can be given to anyone. If the Shehu does
644 not like his younger sister, he can give the title to whomever he wishes.

Dogoma - also the younger sister of the Shehu, but a lesser title than that of Mogorom.

Gumsu - usually head wife of the Shehu, but the title can instead be given, at the Shehu's pleasure, to another wife.

Kərliroma - head of the Shehu's chira.

175 Next let us turn to consider the Chimas, who had been men-
• 423 tioned earlier. Since all land was the Shehu's land, he had
631 the power to give or withdraw the fiefs which were granted to
565 chimas. By custom, certain lands were reserved for the Imam.
554 In addition, the Maira, Gumsu, and Mogorom also had their own
644 fiefs. The remaining lands were largely in the hands of the Shehu's kabuna, his knights and the commanders of his troops.

175 The Shehu's kabuna were divided into those who were free (kambe)
565 and those who were slave (kalya). A number of titles which the
554 Shehu granted were reserved for slaves. Among the slave titles,
567 some were titles of kabuna, and others were not. Both of these, kabuna slaves and non-kabuna slaves, could be chimas. The four most important chimas held the following titles: Kaigama (a slave, and the head of all slave kabuna), Mastrema (a slave, but not a kabuna), Yuroma (a slave, but not a kabuna), Yerima (a freeman and a kabuna).

175 The most important Kanuri titles, all those mentioned above,
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425 671 land is sufficiently old so that he can sell the land if he wishes to. If a man works a piece of land for a long time (for 425 ten years, for example) he can sell it. But in a recent legal 695 case a policeman who worked in Geidam was given land by the Lowan. After a year he left Geidam for Maiduguri and sold the land. The Alkali ruled that he had not had the land for a sufficiently long period of time to enable him to sell it, and forced him to return the sum of money which was paid to him by the new owner.

241 565 592 Land is farmed under a variety of conditions. Talaka farm the land themselves with the help of wives and children. A wealthy man, however, may take a very large section of farm land from the Lowan, which he will not work personally. Instead the members of his household, his many tata njima, farm his land for him. His tata njima work on the farm of the household head [465] because this is one of their duties. They receive no payment 241 in the form of a share of the crops for their labor. Some 565 wealthy men may not have very large households of their own, and 464 [175] may hire day laborers to work for them. This, too, is a new ap- 241 proach to labor for the Kanuri. A man with a very large farm 427 who does not intend to use all of his land himself can rent out sections, particularly if his land is in a very favorable location. The renter pays a fixed sum to the owner, and the crops belong entirely to him. No form of share-cropping is practiced. 241 The Ajia of Geidam has huge sections of land alloted to him. 434 [423] Any of his people, his slaves, his kabuna or others attached to

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571 If the Lawan moves to another town, or is dismissed, the persons who are his tada move with him, while his tala (peasants) wait patiently for a new Lawan to collect taxes and to settle their disputes.

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871 Wisely, the Lawan's son in Magumeri stays out of any active leadership role in his father's organization. His job as the adult education (literacy) organizer for the District of Magumeri, keeps him travelling much of the time and he never interferes with the political organization which he may one day inherit. During the entire period of the field trip he was never once observed taking any role of power and authority towards any of his father's followers, all of whom treated
[554] him with deference. His father is one of the few enthusiastic supporters of adult education and enforces its innovation quite vigorously in his own jurisdictional area, since he knows that this will raise his son's political respectability in the Bornu N.A. (1)

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• 423 All land use rights in the village area except hereditary
[622] usufruct are vested in the Lawan. However, dispensation of land use rights can, in practice, be carried out by Hamlet Heads within the hamlet boundaries, although all such decisions must be cleared with Lawan
632 before their final validation. The Lawan is also approached and told of all land rentals which he witnesses. As noted before he is paid a fee for witnessing marriages and ratifying divorces, and he hears and tries disputes involving his peasants. Indeed most peasants feel more secure about any decisions they have made affecting their neighbours

[208] (1) The Magumeri Village Area peasants are nevertheless not responding very keenly to adult education. They find Lawan's enthusiasm for literacy rather confusing, since one of the main propaganda themes given to innovators by the N.A. (designed by the British) is the alleged skill that literacy gives the peasants in ascertaining whether or not their tax receipts actually correspond to their payments. The fact that it is the Lawan who taxes them - and overtaxes them they believe - and he as well who prods them to learn to read, is one reason why they are mistrustful of the literacy campaign.

634 571 contiguous households close to their superior's residence. The organization has a Wakil as its sub-head who acts as DH on the few occasions when the DH is absent from his District headquarters. The general term for all male members of this extended household organization is waladai (roughly non-kin follower) or tada Ajiabe (sons or boys [554] of the DH). The waladai, whether slave or freeborn, are also called ko'una if they have been given a horse by the DH which gives them a higher status than the unhorsed members of the organization. In Magumeri a few of these followers have joined the DH during their own lives, most other freeborn as well as slave, are hereditary followers of this particular DH and his father before him.

Collectively the members of this group are referred to by non-members as tada Ajiabe. When they are older and married with farms (given to them by the DH)(1) and perhaps have some dry season activity, they are at first glance hardly distinguishable from ordinary peasants. However, unlike ordinary peasants, the DH uses them as messengers and helpers in nomad cattle tax levies. They in turn never fail to ride in a gallop in the DH's honour, if they have a horse. Furthermore, they must be ready and willing to move with their leader to a new District should he be stationed elsewhere. Younger members who live either in the DH's compound or with older members of the organization are often feared by respectable townsfolk. They have no farms, no wives, and no households of their own. They talk, play cards, drink, look for amorous experiences, and are felt to be spies for the DH.

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[423] [425] (1) Within the available land of the District Headquarters there is an acreage which is under the direct dispensation of the DH and beyond the jurisdiction of the Lawan. The DH may also appropriate farm land for his own use or dispensation beyond the borders of present farming activities in the District capital.

462 Men rule, farm, dye, build, work metals, skin, tan and work leather, slay and handle cattle and small livestock, tailor, embroider, make hats, musical instruments, trade, weave mats, and work as labourers. They are also religious specialists, carpenters, mechanics, clerks, civil servants and a host of newly introduced jobs of European origin, as well as being the taxpayers. It is no exaggeration to say that the economy is controlled by men. The male head of the household dispenses all income in cash and in kind resulting from farming and craft work. (Women's gardens are not farms but small plots inside the compound). The male doles out money to his wives for petty market buying and does the major purchases of food grains and clothing himself. He also pays for ceremonies, transportation and most of the gift-giving done by himself and the members of his household. Except for pottery production by female specialists, men control all income producing craft work in the society as well as all the major distributive functions.

423 Almost all rural household heads own some land in or near their hamlet or village. Land ownership results from a combination of usufruct and inheritance rights and is related as well to the local political organization. These factors are discussed in more detail in the section below on operating costs. Many urban people obtain rural farms from relatives in the bush or retain plots of land in rural areas after having moved to the city. This latter group sends out either relatives or labourers to work the land. In some cases the household head moves out from the city to bush for the necessary working period required to tend the farm.

241 Rural peasants work their own land. The men clear the land and are helped in the planting, hoeing and reaping by their wives, and/or other compound members. Another source of labour is the <u>serwa</u> (co-

592 The net effect, productively, seems to be one of disunity since there are really three economic units within the one household. Cohesion is due to kinship and should trouble arise, legal, economic, or political, the unity within this compound, and with the others around it, to which its members are agnatically related, are observable immediately. Even the economic disunity is only partial, since Dolo often helps his older brother at the market, and both do farm work and run messages for their father.

241 [423] Ka'anami has a bush farm to the south of Magumeri village and three small plots in the nearby hamlet of Palongo where he used to live. His wife helps him to plant, hoe, and harvest the crop, as do his brothers. [435] In 1955 he harvested twelve bags of millet (cash value [432] £30/0/0) and four bags of groundnuts (cash value £11/0/0). Thus his [251] agricultural production totalled £41/0/0, one-quarter of which he sold for cash, and three-quarters of which he stored for consumption.

322 Many (but not all) of the men in Ka'anami's agnatic kinship group are calabash makers. This consists of buying dried, raw, half gourds, scraping the insides smooth, and carving designs on the [412] outer surface with hot irons. The tools are simple, wood-handled iron [372] blades, obtained from the blacksmith, and the only other material necessary is charcoal for the fire, which is extremely cheap.

322 433 443 During the dry season, Ka'anami makes on the average two calabashes per day on Fridays and Saturdays, and this ranges from one to three, or on the average about four per week. Sunday he attends the Magumeri market and sells his wares. He buys his raw calabashes from the Thursday market (Ngubura) and does not work much on Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday, except to do commissions for people who give him special orders. He may also attend nearby markets on Monday or Tuesday

231 Mala Bukar, the butcher

463 The butcher's craft, although comparatively lucrative, is a low status occupation. It requires technical skills and social re-

[874] lations beyond the tribe. Manual and anatomical knowledge of butchery is learned during the apprenticeship period, often referred to as "taking up the knife". The craft also requires continuous relations

[439] with cattle owners, who supply the raw material for the work. Since cows are primarily kept by Fulani and Shuwa nomads, this requires inter-tribal relations for the butcher with the cattle people. Sheep and goats are kept locally and sold generally by their keepers to one of the several local butchers.

592 Mala Bukar lives with his two wives, the younger of whom has a small child, aged about three, and two tada njima (sons of the house, in this case, apprentices). There are five huts in the compound, one each for the wives, one for himself, one for the two apprentices, and

592 one for meat storage. The apprentices are both sons of butchers un-

874 related but known to Mala Bukar. They explained that they wished to travel about the country before they settled down in their home towns as butchers. One seemed much surer of returning eventually to his

[831] father's household than the other. They treat Mala Bukar with as much respect as they would a real biological father, but seem to have a somewhat more open discussion with him of their sexual life than sons who live at home.

423 Mala Bukar has inherited some farmland with the kulo fatobe area (the near or house farm area). He also has a plot farther out in

241 the kulo karabe area (far or bush farm area). In addition, his apprentices are clearing (1956) a new plot in the bush farm area which is to replace a depleted one next year. The apprentices are also clearing

342 476 565 the house often aided by the wives of the serwa participants cook a large meal for the men who build the house. Materials are bought by the owner. This method is only practised in the construction of house types "A" and "B". Secondly, building with mud is carried out by specialists 342 331 565 and they must be employed and paid to build the house. However, this requirement is not clearcut; specialists are also used to construct house types "A" and "B", especially "B" which is a larger and more complicated variety. The determining variable for the use of specialists is social status. The higher the status of a male householder, the less likely is he to use a serwa and the more likely is he to utilize specialist labour. [369] [563] Today in the cities, southern Nigerians, especially Ibo contractors, as well as a few Hausa and Kanuri, contract with both the government and private indivudals to build houses using combinations of both traditional and western building techniques and design.

• 423 Rent is paid in the cities where houses are regularly purchased and sold by private persons. [427] In rural areas, in the villages and hamlets, [369] there is no need for house rental, since new housing is cheap and land is not scarce in or near the settlement. Land rights in Bornu are not, however, so simple, for the Kanuri do not operate their system of land tenure under one definite set of rules. The primary criterion for land ownership is usufruct. The land is given to the peasant by the political leader of the community. [425] The peasant and his descendants hold this property for as long as they maintain its use, giving 423 632 the feudal leader a tithe every year on the produce. In Maguneri, the Lawan (Village Head) has nominal control over all free land within a radius of about three-quarters of a mile from the town. Farms within this circle are called kulo fatobe (compound or "House" farms), while those beyond are called kulo karabe (bush farms). Permission should be sought

425 Permission should be sought for a new farm in either area. However, land obtained from the Lawan
632 in the "house" farm section is already cleared and bounded into plots;
• 423 this type of acquisition is thought and spoken of as a bequest. On the other hand, permission to use bush land is not so much a grant from the Lawan as a formal recognition of his political leadership in the community. Furthermore, bushland must be cleared and the act of clearing is a traditionally accepted criterion for the establishment of property rights.

423 The "house" farms are not be confused with the small garden
241 plots kept usually by women inside the compound walls.(1) These latter plots are planted with early maturing maize, millet and vegetables, which are used for easing the hard times before the harvest and as a
423 private source of income by women. To the Kanuri, the word fato used
[829] to describe a piece of land adjacent to the town or village reflects their conception of the settlement as a set of extended patrilocal households. The lands immediately adjacent to a stable settlement are owned by the long term resident households and passed on to descendants. These people also own bush farms but can be distinguished from more recent arrivals to the town by their ownership of plots in the house farm are.

423 The difference between bush and "house" farms can thus be
829 seen in Kanuri eyes as a difference in social identification. A "house" farm represents older, more integrated membership in the community, while a bush farm indicates newness or transience. The former means a working relationship, not only a formal one, between the owner and the

[192] (1) There is no difficulty here if the term is translated literally; fatobe - of the compound, i.e. the genitive case, meaning the farm of the compound. In-the-compound would require the use of the Kanuri word suro - in or inside of.

423 [829] political leader, and/or it means that the person has inherited land through his agnatic relationship to a previous community member.

A second characteristic of Kanuri land tenure is its progressively private character through time, especially after an inheritance. Thus if A receives a plot in the house farm area from his Lawan and three seasons later leaves the town the land returns to the dispensing power of the political leader. However, if A receives land from his father and wishes to leave the area, he may give the land to a friend, or attempt to sell it, especially if he considers it a "good" farm plot. That is to say, after land use rights have passed on through inheritance, the dispensation of these rights comes (more properly) under the power of the inheritors using the land. However, things are not quite so clearcut in practice as this description implies. Thus much depends on the particular political leader and the peasant in question. The writer has seen land rented by A to B when it had only been given to A by the Lawan a few years before, and there are numerous stories of Lawans attempting to repossess land use rights or their dispensation after several generations. Thus the second characteristic is more properly speaking a tendency among other. Kanuri land tenure as observed today is really the result of three forces which operate in greater or lesser intensity through time. These are (a) the rights of land dispensation of the political leader, especially to land adjacent to the settlement; (b) the rights of agnatic kin members over inherited land; and (c) the right accruing to anyone through clearing new land and using it. The stability of this ownership system depends primarily upon the political relations between households and their local political leaders. Given a working political unit in which rights, duties and obligations of superiors and subordinates in the community

423 are not in conflict, then no trouble emerges from these potentially conflicting criteria of land ownership.

425 428 [182] The following table, indicating sources of land acquisition, demonstrates the fact that for the most part Kanuri land tenure is closely related to traditional modes of socio-political organization.

TABLE XVII

Table of Modes of Land Acquisition for Seventy-five Cultivators

(1)

Occupation	No. of plots	Inherited #	Inherited %	From pol. leader ϕ #	From pol. leader ϕ %	Cleared bush #	Cleared bush %	Bought or given as a gift #	Bought or given as a gift %	% of row totals
farmers	48	31	64.6	7	14.6	9	18.8	1	2.1	100.0%
craftsmen	27	17	62.9	10	37.1	0	-	0	-	100.0%
traders	26	14	53.9	5	19.2	5	19.2	2	7.7	100.0%
pol. & rel. specialists	23	10	43.5	10	43.5	2	8.7	1	4.3	100.0%
Totals	124	72	58.1	32	25.8	16	12.9	4	3.2	100.0%

ϕ From Lawan or Bulama.

The table indicates that 58.1% of all farm land in the three towns examined was acquired through inheritance, i.e. kinship affiliation, while an additional 25.8% was obtained through some political relationship between the cultivator and his local leader. In other words, 83.9% of all land was acquired by producers as a result of their traditional roles in either the kinship or political organization of the rural scene, whereas only 16.1% of the land holdings were the result of individual effort, purchase or gift.

425 It should also be noted that the 25.8% of all land obtained from political leaders refers to cleared, bounded plots, not bushland.

425 571 The high proportion of land obtained by political and religious specialists from the political leader reflects the social relations of these informants, many of whom have a close subordinate relationship to followers and supporters of the Lawan of their town.

241 (651) (134) (433) Operating costs for rural farm plots are governed by two factors. Firstly, there are tithes (zakat) which all farmers pay to their local political leader as a form of traditional tax. Secondly, there is soil depletion which brings decreasing results for equal effort through time. Thus even with proper planting, weeding and harvesting, the yield on a one acre plot of millet may range from eighty to four hundred pounds of threshed product, while the range for groundnuts is almost as large (one hundred and ten to three hundred and fifty pounds of decorticated nuts per acre). Farm plots are generally used for three to five year periods and then left fallow for four to six years. It should be noted that this soil depletion factor tends to activiate the political organisation.(1) The farmer requiring new land generally seeks the advice of his local political leader as to whether to clear new bush land or perhaps take up some unused old plot already cleared, if such be available.(2)

242 425 571

423 In summary, land in Bornu can be categorized under four headings: (1) private property, which today refers primarily to house sites in large cities: these are not deeded but they can be rented or sold in a commercial transaction; (2) usufruct property, that is owned because the holder uses it, or cleared it from the bush; this also refers to

(631) (1) Increased numbers in the household operates to the same effect.
(2) In order to avoid the anomaly of a higher political authority having to ask a lower one for favours, in places like Magumeri which house a District Head, a large section of land is set aside for the use of the incumbent D.H. and his subordinates. Thus the followers of the D.H. may apply directly to him rather than the local Lawan for land use rights. N.A. employees have their choice, they may ask the D.H. or the Lawan if they wish to obtain farm plots. In all these cases it is understood that tithing is unnecessary, for none of the persons involved are "peasants of Lawan".

423 rural house sites; (3) resting land which is owned through usufruct right but whose soil is depleted; (4) virgin land between settlements, 425 which is open to ownership through the operation of usufruct rights. Finally, land may be transferred through inheritance, allocation by political leaders, clearing of bush and sale or gift.

Labour

464 874 241 464 476 Besides his own efforts, the Kanuri male householder can obtain help for his craft work from apprentices, who have entered his service. On his farm he may get extra labour from: (1) his wife or wives; (2) other compound members, such as apprentices, wives' relatives, or his own kinsmen or children, if these latter are old enough to contribute; (3) hired labourers who may work either on a contract price for the entire job, or by the day; (4) the co-operative work group (serwa) mentioned above. These people are not necessarily of the same age group. They help one another at farming, building and fixing houses, compound walls and other jobs requiring collective effort. Serwa are easily joined and as easily left and may have a long or a short life depending upon the interest of the members in obtaining such a labour source, as well as upon social and physical mobility of individual group members. The following table indicates the sources of labour utilized by the seventy-five farm owners in the survey.

TABLE XVIII

Table Showing Numbers and Percentages of Cultivators Utilizing the Four Kinds of Labour Sources, in the Farm Survey

Occupation	N	Men using wives		Men using others in compound		Men using labourers		Men using serwa	
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
farmers	25	25	100	13	52	8	32	15	60
craftsmen	16	16	100	12	75	7	44	9	56
traders	17	17	100	13	77	12	71	6	35
political and religious spec.	17	16	94	5	29	6	35	6	35
Totals	75	74	98	43	57	33	44	36	48

442 out for some new supplier relations since he has recently lost money
571 for Alkali Bukar (1) and the latter, kinship notwithstanding, has been reluctant to continue his financing. Without being asked, Ajimi referred to the possibility of relationships in the future with non-kin backers to meet his need for a mai gida.

(d) Alkali Bukar

441 Alkali Bukar who up until summer of 1957, had been financing
452 Ajimi, was at one time the Alkali of Magumeri and still owns a choice
[423] farm plot there which his son plants and harvests for him with the aid
[648] of labourers. When he was dismissed from his judicial post several years ago by the British he went into trade using his house in Maiduguri as his headquarters.

441 He gives out money to people like Ajimi to trade with and
452 takes a share of the profits. Some of these subordinates are kin rela-
571 tions, most are not. Those who are not consanguinal kin start out in his household as tada njima where they carry water, cut grass for the for the horses, run messages and so on. For this they receive their food, shelter, clothing and a little spending money. If over a period of one to two years they prove trustworthy the Alkali gives them some
441 money for trade. During 1956-57 he engaged in the following ventures
438 in Bornu:

(1) Several (two or three) "boys" bought millet in Geidam for sale in Maiduguri.

(2) One "boy" sold cloth (obtained by the Alkali) in Damasac, as well as onions, which the subordinate obtained himself with the Alkali's money.

[684] (1) Ajimi has a penchant for adultery and has had to pay several large fines recently, the money for which he obtained from his trading receipts.